

REPORT



TO THE

BELLINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

For the Year 1972

BY

J. M. McEWAN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b29525342>

REPORT

TO THE

BELLINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

For the Year 1972

BY

J. M. McEWAN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health

STAFF :

Medical Officer of Health :

J. M. McEWAN, M.B., CH.B., D.P.H.

Surveyor & Chief Public Health Inspector :

H. F. L. DAVIES, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

Deputy Surveyor & Public Health Inspector :

K. A. LUPTON, M.A.P.H.I., A.M.I.P.C.

Building Inspector

from 6th November, 1972 :

R. ARNOTT

Mrs. J. FULLERTON — *Clerk/Typist*

Offices :

COUNCIL OFFICES, BELLINGHAM, HEXHAM
NORTHUMBERLAND.

Telephone : Bellingham 239

To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council of Bellingham :

Mr. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1972.

Again it has to be stated that the circumstances of the District altered in no material way during the year. The District has to an extreme degree the problems of a large rural area with poor communication and little diversity of employment, and no further progress is to be reported on the proposal for an advance factory in Bellingham. No decision has yet been reached on the proposed impounding reservoir of Kielder Water, a project that would have a profound effect on the valley of the North Tyne without apparently bringing compensatory benefits. It has now been accepted that Bellingham will join with four neighbouring local authorities to form Tynedale District to begin administration on the 1st April, 1974. This means that a Council of 35 members will be replaced by 5 representatives on the new Council, but the number of parishes remains unchanged and local interests will continue to be guarded at two levels.

For the first time for many years the population showed an increase during 1972, but the increase was small and may not be of great significance, and the natural increase of births over deaths was only one. The birth and death rates were both marginally higher than the figure for England and Wales. There were three deaths in infancy, giving an infant mortality rate of 45.0 per 1,000 live births compared with the national average of 17 per 1,000 but where the number of births is so small the figure for any one year need not give rise to concern. As in previous years the main causes of death were diseases of the heart and circulation, and almost half the deaths occurred in people over 75, the highest age group.

Infectious disease calls for no special comment, with five cases of measles and one case of scarlet fever. There were no cases of tuberculosis and no deaths. The risk of undulant fever, especially to school children, has been a subject of special concern, as in the North Tyne area untreated milk is used from a herd with the history of an occasional reactor, but as there is no alternative supply and pasteurisation is

impracticable, it has been thought sufficient to keep the herd under particularly regular surveillance. An eradication scheme for brucellosis has begun in England, but it will apparently be some years before it is introduced into Northumberland, and until then the possibility of human infection remains a cause for anxiety to the Health Department and the Council.

During the year the nine houses at Kirkwhelpington were completed and the Wark scheme progressed. Preliminary steps were taken to provide sheltered accommodation of 14 units in Bellingham, and this will be a useful contribution to the housing of the frail elderly and handicapped. There are plans also for building a further 27 family houses in Bellingham. Improvement works were begun on the older Council houses at Otterburn. A further 23 private houses were improved with the aid of discretionary grants, and the total number of houses so improved is now almost 400. The value of the scheme to such a rural area is inestimable, and it provides homes with modern amenities where they are required, and where their replacement by Council houses could not be considered.

The main centres of population having been provided with modern sewage disposal schemes, the smaller areas are now being catered for. The scheme for the south side of West Woodburn was completed during the year, and a scheme for Falstone and at Stannersburn is being prepared. Almost the whole District is supplied with water of satisfactory quality and quantity by the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company, who undertake frequent sampling and deal promptly with unsatisfactory results and complaints. The water is of low plumbo-solvency and has a low natural content of fluoride. The Health Department remain responsible for the few private and proposed supplies.

I have again to thank the Council for their continued interest in the work of the Health Department and their support. The Clerk and other officers remain most helpful and co-operative and the staff of the Department have carried out their work efficiently during the year.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. M. McEWAN,

Medical Officer of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS

Population

The population estimated at 30th June, 1972 was 4,750 an increase of 20 on the previous year.

Death Rate

65 deaths were registered during 1972, giving a death rate of 13.7 per 1,000 population, or 13.8 when the Area Comparability Factor is applied. The figure for England and Wales is 12.1 per 1,000.

Birth Rate

There were 66 live births during the year, and when an adjustment factor is applied this gives a birth rate of 16.7 per 1,000 population. This is to be compared with the national figure of 14.8 per 1,000.

With no still births, the still birth rate is nil per 1,000 births, compared with 12.0 per 1,000 for England and Wales.

Infant Mortality

3 infants died under the age of one year. The infant mortality rate is 45.0 per 1,000 live births. The infant mortality rate for England and Wales is 17.0 per 1,000 live births.

Live births	..	..	..	..	..	66
Rate per 1,000 population	..	..	..	..	16.7	
(England & Wales 14.8 per 1,000)						
Illegitimate live births..	..	..	..	..	5	
Per cent of total live births	..	..	..	8.0		
Still births	..	..	..	..	Nil	
Rate per 1,000 live and still births	..	..	Nil			
(England & Wales 12.0 per 1,000)						
Total live and still births	..	..	..	63		
Infant Deaths (under one year)	..	..	..	6		

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Measles : 5 cases were notified.

Scarlatina : 1 case was notified.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

The area of the Bellingham Rural District is 246,645 acres.

The estimated population for 1972 is 4,750.

The number of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1972 was 1,841 of which 273 are owned by the Local Authority.

The sum represented by a penny rate is £1628.997p.

The rateable value is £172,941.

HEALTH SERVICES

Laboratory Facilities

Facilities in the area continue to be provided by the Public Health Laboratory in Newcastle General Hospital which gives an efficient service.

Ambulance Service

The local ambulance service is provided for the County Council by the Red Cross, and a satisfactory service is maintained. In addition to the ambulance, a car service is available for suitable cases and is of considerable value in such a large district. Since the passenger train service was discontinued much extra mileage has been run to allow patients to keep hospital appointments and to allow mothers and children to attend clinics, but the use of the service appears to have stabilised now.

Since 1961, a call house has been established at the British Red Cross Society ambulance depot in Bellingham at which requests for the ambulance car service are received.

Home Nursing and Health Visiting

The district nurses are all provided with cars, and their nursing work continues to be excellent. In spite of the difficulty in arranging for suitable help in a country district, the Home Help Service run by the County Council continues to function satisfactorily. The County Health Visitors work in harmony with the General Practitioners in the area and do much valuable work.

Maternity and Child Welfare

Five Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, staffed by the County Council, operate at Bellingham, Otterburn, Byrness, Kielder and Wark. Immunisation against diphtheria is carried out at these centres or is done by the General Practitioner, while all vaccination is carried out by the General Practitioners.

TABLE I

The following table shows the principal statistics for the years 1968-1972.

Year	Live Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	General Death Rate per 1,000 Population	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births
1968	17.96	12.5	Nil.
1969	15.5	11.8	15.0
1970	17.0	14.5	14.0
1971	18.2	13.1	28.0
1972	16.7	13.8	45.0

ANNUAL RETURNS OF FOOD POISONING NOTIFICATIONS, YEAR 1972

Food Poisoning Notifications Returned to Registrar General

					TOTAL
Outbreaks due to identified agents	..	..			Nil.
Outbreaks of undiscovered cause	..	..	..		Nil.
Single Cases :					
Agent identified	..	..	..	..	Nil
Unknown cause	..	..	..	..	Nil.
Total	..	..	..	..	<u>Nil.</u>

TABLE II.

Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1972 :—

Notifiable Diseases	Males	Females	Totals
Measles	2	3	5
Scarlatina	—	1	1
	2	4	6

TABLE III.
TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Mortality during 1972 :—

Age Periods	New Cases				Nett Deaths in Bellingham Rural District			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0— 1 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1— 5 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—15 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—25 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25—35 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35—45 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45—55 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—65 ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 & over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE IV

The following table classifies deaths according to their age groups :—

Age Groups	Males	Females	Totals
under 4 weeks ..	1	—	1
4 weeks to 1 year. .	1	1	2
1 to 4 years ..	—	—	—
5—14	—	—	—
15—24	—	—	—
25—34	—	—	—
35—44	—	—	—
45—54	4	—	4
55—64	3	2	5
65—74	15	11	26
75 and over ..	9	18	27

ANALYSIS OF DEATHS BY CAUSES

According to Registrar General's Classification.

Causes of Death	1972	
	Males	Females
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	3	—
Malignant Neoplasm, Intestine	2	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus ..	1	1
Other Malignant Neoplasms	—	3
Diabetes Mellitus	1	1
Hypertensive Disease	—	1
Ischaemic Heart Disease	9	11
Cerebrovascular Disease	5	5
Other Diseases of Circulatory System ..	2	1
Pneumonia	2	1
Bronchitis and Emphysema	3	—
Other diseases of Digestive System ..	—	2
Diseases of Musculo-Skeletal System ..	1	—
Congenital Anomalies	1	—
Symptoms and ill defined Conditions ..	—	1
All other Accidents.	2	2
Suicide and Self-inflicted Injuries ..	1	1

Public Health Inspector's Annual Report

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1972

Works of improvement of basic amenities in the field of environmental health have maintained steady progress during the period under review.

WATER

The position at the time of this report, since the Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company, under the Water Order of 1951, became the statutory water undertaking covering this area is as follows :—

Number of dwellings supplied from public mains :

<i>Parish</i>						<i>No. of Properties</i>
Bellingham	..	..	..	..	..	392
Tarset	..	..	..	..	..	62
Falstone	..	..	..	..	..	30
Wark	..	..	..	..	..	212
Otterburn	..	..	..	..	..	139
Rochester (including Byrness)				..	..	79
Corsenside	..	..	..	..	..	170
Kirkwhelpington		..	..	..	..	82
Birtley	..	..	..	..	..	39
Forestry Commission private supply to Kielder (and Lewisburn camping site)					..	126

Samples

During the year 2 samples were taken from private sources of water :—

					<i>Coliform bacilli</i>
1 sample	..	..	..	..	Nil
1 sample	..	..	..	..	7

Where analyses have proved unsatisfactory, follow-up samples have been taken and technical advice given on problems arising from collection and storage and possible sources of pollution.

The Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company took 163 samples from the main water supply in various parts of the area during the year. These were all of “satisfactory” bacteriological quality except in 7 cases, which were the subject of check samples, proving satisfactory. The Chief Chemist of Throckley Laboratory, Dr. A. T. Palin, has been helpful and co-operative in any queries which have arisen.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The main settlement groups in the two principal valleys of the North Tyne and Rede have been provided with works of sewerage and sewage disposal :

Local Authority :	Bellingham Woodburn Wark Birtley Otterburn Kirkwhelpington Ridsdale East Woodburn	}	Operational
Septic Tanks : (Local (Authority)	Rochester Lanehead Greenhaugh Reedsmouth Kirkharle	}	Operational
Forestry Commission :	Kielder Butteryhaugh Stonehaugh Byrness Lewisburn Camping Site	}	Operational
Northumberland County Council :	Brownrigg Camp School	}	Operational

A further 4 treatment plants have been installed to private properties.

HOUSING

Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1971, Housing Act 1961, Housing Acts 1964, 1969 and 1971.

The increased demand for government grants for the modernisation of dwellings has continued during the year. By extending the final date for completion of work in development areas the position has been eased for the contractors in this area.

Works of improvement to 23 dwellinghouses were completed during the year with Improvement grant contributions.

There were 37 applications for Improvement grants and 13 for Standard grants.

The total number of applications approved for grant-aid since the inception of the legislation is :

Improvement Grants :	391
Standard Grants :	75

During the period under review, the Council commenced improvement works to the six dwellings at Redewater View, Otterburn.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

Systematic cleansing of the villages and properties along the route has been maintained. The areas covered are :—

Bellingham	Wark	Ridsdale
Reedsmouth	Stonehaugh	Great Bavington
Greenhaugh	Birtley	Little Bavington
Kirkharle	Falstone	Rochester
Kirkwhelpington	Kielder	Otterburn
Byrness	East Woodburn	West Woodburn

Tips. There are four tips in the area situated at :—
Otterburn, Woodburn, Kielder and Knowesgate.

The rural area is covered by twelve parishes over an area of 380 sq. miles, and throughout the year the major portion has been served with weekly or fortnightly collections.

Although 50% of the refuse tips were not available for use during the year, necessitating longer hauls, it was found possible by the introduction of a bonus scheme, to increase the collection from outlying settlements and farms and still maintain an efficient service.

Employees : 2 loader-drivers and 3 loaders.

The cost of such service is 6.54p in the £.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949

One part-time operative is under Contract with the Council and methods of treatment are those approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

No. of properties surveyed..	..	52
No. infested with :		
Rats .. .. .	..	34
Mice .. .. .	..	4

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Slaughter of Animals Act, 1958

Meat Inspection Regulations, 1963

There are three butchers in the area — one operates a slaughterhouse and two buy carcass meat. 100% meat inspection is maintained. 3 slaughterman's licences have been issued.

Analysis of inspection is as under :—

Cattle including cows	..	..	206
Pigs .. .. .	..	..	—
Sheep and Lambs	..	..	728

Condemned :	<i>Bovine</i>	<i>Sheep</i>
Carcass of which some part or organ was condemned	42	41
Percentage of numbers inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci ..	20.4	5.6

Other foods examined and found unfit for human consumption :—

Butcher Meat	..	..	..	..	1022 lbs.
Frozen Foods :					
Vegetables	..	..	..	..	69 cartons
Fish	..	..	..	..	49 „
Meat	..	..	..	..	41 „
Pastry..	..	..	..	..	10 „
Ice Cream	..	..	..	..	12 „
Yoghurt	..	..	..	..	92 „
Cakes	..	..	..	..	12 „
Canned Fruits	..	..	..	..	23
Canned Meats	..	..	..	..	5
Canned Vegetables	..	..	..	..	56
Cereals	..	..	..	..	366 lbs.

FOOD HYGIENE (GENERAL REGULATIONS), 1969

Some 63 premises in the area come within the scope of this legislation. Regular and systematic inspection is maintained.

Food Premises : The following are the types of food premises in the district.

Bakeries	..	..	..	..	3
Butchers	..	..	..	..	4
Cafes	..	..	..	..	7
Clubs	..	..	..	..	4
General Dealers (Grocers etc.)	..	..	..	..	18
Public Houses and Hotels	..	..	..	..	18
School Kitchens	..	..	..	..	9

RIVERS AND STREAMS

1 case was reported where nuisance through pollution was caused. Informal representation resolved the problem.

OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES ACT, 1963

Registration has covered the following classification :—

Offices..	..	..	..	..	6
Retail Shops	..	..	..	..	29
Catering Establishments	..	..	..	..	10
Wholesale Shops, Warehouses	..	..	..	..	3
Fuel Storage Depot..	..	..	..	..	1

Systematic and regular inspection is effected and progress made to implement this legislation.

INSPECTIONS AND VISITS

Housing :

Demolition.. .. .	—
Improvements and Repairs ..	743
Verminous premises	1
Water Supply	15
Drainage	486
Factories and Workshops ..	30
Licensed Premises	75
Refuse Collection and Disposal ..	94
Rodent Control	20
Infectious Disease.. .. .	—
Slaughterhouses	105
Shops	142
Fishmongers (vans)	3
Bakeries	14
Mobile Shops (Food)	27
Offices	18

FACTORIES ACT, 1961

Part I of the Act.

I.—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health.

PREMISES (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	2	4	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority	20	26	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	22	30	—	—

II.—Cases in which DEFECTS were found

(If defects are discovered at the premises on two, three or more separate occasions they should be reckoned as two, three or more “cases”).

PARTICULARS (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	To H.M. Inspector (4)	By H.M. Inspector (5)	
Want of Cleanliness (S. 1.)	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S. 2)... ..	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S. 3)	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S. 4)	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S. 6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S. 7)	—	—	—	—	—
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Out-work)	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	—	—	—	—	—

FACTORIES ACT, 1961

Sec. 133 - Outworkers.

No outworkers were registered during the year.

To the Chairman of the Council, the Chairman and Members of the Health and Housing Committee, Dr. J.M. McEwan and members of the staff I express my thanks for the support rendered throughout the year.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

H. F. L. DAVIES,

*Surveyor and Chief Public
Health Inspector.*

